

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 BIB-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05

IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /076 W

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R 081156Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2475

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BELGRADE 1693

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJ: MEDIA COMMENT ON WP BELITTLEMENT OF YUGOSLAV WAR ROLE

REF: BELGRADE 1617

1. MEDIA COMMENT ON SOVIET AND WP DISPARAGING OF YUGOSLAV ROLE
IN WWII FOLLOWING TITO'S SPEECH APR 2 (REFTEL) THUS FAR HAS BEEN
WIDESPREAD BUT MILD.

2. ALTHOUGH EDITOR OF MASS CIRCULATION POLITKA CHARACTERIZED SPEECH
AS MAJOR AND VERY STRONG, HIS PAPER'S INTERNATIONAL REVIEW ON
SUNDAY, USUAL PLACE FOR SUMMING UP AND REINFORCING COMMENTARY
ON WEEK'S ISSUES, COMMENTED ONLY THAT YUGOSLAVIA RESPECTS SACRIFICES
AND STRUGGLES OF OTHERS (NOT IDENTIFIED), AND EXPECTS SAME IN RETURN.

3. IN STRONGEST STATEMENT, WEEKLY NIN'S ARTICLE ENTITLED "MERRY-
GO-ROUND OF UNTRUTHS" STATED "GENERALS' STATEMENTS" FROM
MOSCOW ARE OUT OF TUNE WITH MOOD WHICH SHOULD PREVAIL DURING
30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, AND RAISES QUESTION OBLIQUELY
WHETHER SOMEONE "WANTS TO REOPEN A DANGEROUS

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CIRCLE WHICH WE THOUGHT WAS CLOSED FOREVER IN THIS MORE INTELLIGENT

WORLD". ANOTHER WEEKLY, EKONOMSKA POLITIKA, IN QUOTING TITO'S SPEECH EXTENSIVELY NOTES ITS SPECIAL ACCENT ON "PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND COMMUNIST PARTIES". PARTY ORGAN KOMUNIST CARRIES TEXT OF SPEECH WITHOUT COMMENT -- A CLEAR INDICATION THAT WHILE SOVIET STATEMENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PASS UNNOTICED AN EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO AVOID POLEMICS.

4. OTHER WEEKEND ARTICLES RECOUNT HISTORY OF YUGOSLAV PART IN WAR WITHOUT COMMENTING ON HOW IT IS BEING MISREPRESENTED. HOWEVER, ONE ARTICLE REPORTS ON VETERANS MEETING WHICH SENT LETTER TO TITO "BITTERLY PROTESTING" ATTEMPTS TO TWIST HISTORICAL FACTS AND BELITTLE YUGOSLAV SACRIFICES BUT WITHOUT CLEARLY FINGERING CULPRIT.

5. A WESTERN JOURNALIST (WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT DODER) TOLD US AN UNNAMED YUGOSLAV OFFICIAL SAID TITO'S PURPOSE WAS TO FORESTALL A BRUISING PRESS EXCHANGE (WITH THE SOVIETS) WHICH COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL, BY AN INITIAL REACTION TO ARTICLES DESIGNED TO INDUCE SOVIET CHANGE IN LINE.

6. DODER WAS ASKED BY THE FEDERAL INFORMATION COMMITTEE WHY HE HAD NOT FILED A STORY ON THE SPEECH, REINFORCING OUR IMPRESSION THAT YUGOSLAWS WANT IT TO HAVE MAXIMUM EXPOSURE. WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED THAT

THEY PUT ITEM ON IT IN THE NON-ALIGNED PRESS POOL. IN ADDITION, THE ENGLISH TANJUG WIRE SERVICE HAS CARRIED FOREIGN COMMENT ON SPEECH; THIS WOULD NORMALLY BE REPORTED IN SERBO-CROATIAN TANJUG BULLETIN FOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WORLD WAR II, SPEECHES, COMBAT OPERATIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELGRA01693
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750121-1177
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750473/aaaaconp.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BELGRADE 1617
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <05 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA COMMENT ON WP BELITTLEMENT OF YUGOSLAV WAR ROLE
TAGS: PFOR, YO, (TITO, JOSIP BROZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006